In order to arrest the decline in prices of chillies, the Government conducts market intervention operations on the specific request of State Governments with a view to saving the farmers from distress sales.

(b) The Ministry of Agriculture has a comprehansive scheme for studying the cost of cultivation of principal crops under which 27 crops are covered at present. Chillies however, is not covered within this scheme. As such the average cost of production of chillies is not available.

(c) The information on average yield and average domestic prices of chillies is given in the tables in part (a) of the Question.

Regarding steps taken to encourage chillies growers, a Central Sector Scheme for Integrated Development of Spices is being implemented for increasing the production and productivity of spices including chillies. The following programmes are taken up for the development of chillies under this scheme :—

(i) Establishment of demonstration-cum-seed multiplication plots.

(ii) Demonstration of plant protection measures ; and

(iii) Distribution of plant protection equipments.

Re-organisation of crops/commodity Directorate

691. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the date and the composition of the committee formulated for studying reoganisation of crops/commodity directorate;

(b) the extent of expenditure incurred so far since its inception;

(c) what are its recommendations and steps taken by Government to implement them; and

(d) what are the reasons for non-implementation of recommendation so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (d) No Standing Committee has been studying re-organisation of the Crops/Commodity Development Directorates. There fore, the question of the Committee's recommendations and implementation thereof or incurring any expenditure on such a Committee does not arise. However, a small departmental working group was constituted under the Chairmanship of the then Special Secretary to work out proposals on re-organisation of the Directorates and no final decision has yet been arrived at on re-organisation proposal.

Special Plans for drought prone areas of Bihar

692. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any Special Plans for the drought prone areas of Bihar;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) by when Government propose to launch the special plan in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) is being implemented in 54 blocks of 5 districts in Bihar. No Special Plans for drought prone areas of Bihar have been prepared.

(c) Does not arise.

Loss suffered by the North Indian Cotton Growers

693. SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the report that the cotton growers in Northern India have suffered a loss amounting to Rs. 1,000 crores as the prices of raw cotton prices declined sharply this year; and

(b) if so, whether Government plan to increase the support price of cotton at least to Rs. 1,200 as claimed by the Northern India Cotton Growers' representative ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) No, Sir. Owing to a bumper crop during the 1992-93 season, prices of raw cotton this year have declined as compared to last year. These prices have, however, remained much above the minimum support price level.

(b) The Government has already fixed the Minimum Support Price for the two basic varieties of cotton at Rs. 900/-per quintal for F-414/H-777 and Rs. 1050/-per quintal for H-4 varieties for the 1993-94 season thereby effecting a substantial increase of Rs. 100/-per quintal compared to last year's Minimum Support Price for both the varieties.

Outdated coconut oil extraction process

694. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the wake of deteriorating edible oil situation in the country, Government propose to embark upon a crash programme for development of post-harvest technology in regard to coconut processing;

(b) whether the coconut planters are still resorting to out dated technologies for preparation of dried/desicated coconut thereby prolonging the extraction of oil from the nuts; and

(c) whether Government propose to take steps to improve upon the sun-drying process currently followed, by more sophisticated/ mechanised process of coconut drying/desiccation perfected by Phillipines and Indonesia through import and installation of pilot plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) The Coconut Development Board under the Project 'Technology Development Centre', undertakes programmes for promotion and diversification of coconut processing. A process for production of coconut cream has been developed and process for spray dried coconut milk powder is being developed. Adoption of new technologies in desiccated coconut shell charcoal activated carbon etc. is being encouraged.

(b) and (c) For copra drying, the the sun drying method is used which is the cheapest and most suitable under Indian conditions and takes only about 6-8 days for drying. During rainy season kiln drying is adopted. Sometimes combination of both the methods are adopted. Since major of the Copra processors are small scale dealers and handle very small quantity of nuts, modern mechanical drying process is not very popular. There is no proposal to import coconut drying/ desication technology from Indonesia and Phillipines.